



Department of Justice

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CALI CARTEL LEADER EXTRADITED TO THE UNITED STATES **TO FACE DRUG TRAFFICKING CHARGES**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales, U.S. Attorneys Marcos Daniel Jiménez of the Southern District of Florida and David N. Kelley of the Southern District of New York, DEA Administrator Karen P. Tandy and Michael J. Garcia, the Department of Homeland Security Assistant Secretary for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, announced today that Miguel Rodriguez-Orejuela has been extradited from Colombia to the United States to face narcotics trafficking and money laundering charges.

Rodriguez-Orejuela, one of the alleged leaders and founders of the infamous Cali Cartel, arrived in Miami today. He is scheduled to make an initial appearance before a United States Magistrate Judge in Miami on Monday.

Miguel Rodriguez-Orejuela and his brother, Gilberto, are charged in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury in the Southern District of Florida with conspiracy to import cocaine, conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine, and conspiracy to launder drug proceeds. The Rodriguez-Orejuela brothers are also named in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury in the Southern District of New York, charging them with a separate money laundering conspiracy. Ten other defendants are named in the Miami indictments, along with the Rodriguez-Orejuela brothers. Gilberto Rodriguez-Orejuela was extradited to the United States in December 2004. The brothers are named in the Attorney General's Consolidated Priority Organization Target (CPOT) list.

The charges pending against Miguel and Gilberto Rodriguez-Orejuela in Miami are the result of a multi-year investigation in the Southern District of Florida known as "Operation Cornerstone." The investigation was led by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement of the Department of

Homeland Security, with assistance from the Drug Enforcement Administration. The High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area program (HIDTA) was supportive and instrumental in this case. Colombian law enforcement officials also cooperated in the investigation. The charges pending against Miguel and Gilberto Rodriguez-Orejuela in the Southern District of New York are the results of a joint Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF) investigation called "Operation Dynasty," which involved the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, the DEA, the Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control, the Colombian National Police, and the Colombian Fiscalía Money Laundering Section. The extradition was assisted by the Office of International Affairs, Criminal Division, U.S. Department of Justice.

"Operation Cornerstone" has resulted in the seizure of almost 50,000 kilograms of cocaine and \$15 million in U.S. currency. Prior to the initial indictment in this case, almost 100 other defendants, including some of the defendants' criminal defense attorneys, were successfully prosecuted during the course of the investigation. "Operation Dynasty" targets the

numerous Colombian front companies, including companies involved in the production and sale of pharmaceutical drugs, that the Rodriguez-Orejuela brothers are alleged to have used to launder the Cali Cartel's illicit fortune.

In addition to the criminal charges, the Miami indictment seeks the forfeiture of \$2.1 billion, which represents money received in exchange for and used to facilitate the distribution of controlled substances and the amount of money involved in the money laundering conspiracy. The Southern District of New York indictment also contains a forfeiture allegation in the amount of \$1 billion.

"Drug traffickers everywhere are on notice that they can no longer use geography or the passage of time to evade justice," said Marcos Daniel Jiménez, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of Florida. "The extraditions of Miguel Rodriguez-Orejuela and of his brother last December come after years of hard work by prosecutors in the Southern District of Florida and our law enforcement partners. Without their unyielding courage and tireless dedication, this day would not be a reality."

"The most effective way to dismantle international narcotics organizations and to deter new organizations from forming is to destroy their ability to profit from their poison," said David N. Kelley, U.S. Attorney for the Southern District of New York. "This successful extradition not only ensures that the leadership of the Cali Cartel will not enjoy the vast sums of money that they made in the drug business, but it also demonstrates to all traffickers - past, present and future - that the United States and Colombia will tenaciously investigate and prosecute any and all attempts to launder illicit narcotics proceeds."

"This is a great day for U.S. and Colombian citizens," said DEA Administrator Karen P. Tandy.

“Miguel Rodriguez-Orejuela will now face justice in a U.S. court of law where he will answer to American citizens who suffered from his relentless poisoning of our neighborhoods. This extradition demonstrates drug kingpins can try to legitimize and launder their billions of dollars of dirty drug money, but law enforcement will reveal these criminal undertakings for what they are and will put them out of business permanently.”

“For years, the Cali cartel leaders thought they could operate beyond the reach of U.S. law enforcement. Today’s extradition once again demonstrates the end of that era. I am extremely proud of the ICE agents in Miami and Colombia who investigated this case with their law enforcement counterparts for so many years,” said Michael J. Garcia, Assistant Secretary for U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement at the Department of Homeland Security.

The charges contained in the indictments are merely allegations. All defendants are presumed innocent until and unless convicted in a court of law.

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